(a) whether Government is aware of the big rise in the number of elephant deaths in different parts of the country due to poaching, accidents, etc;

(b) whether Government has any plans to stop further decline in forest cover especially in the Eastern States so that hungry elephants do not stray into populated areas;

(c) whether Government has any plans to realign railway lines running through reserve forests and national parks to prevent elephants and other wildlife being killed by speeding trains; and

(d) the steps Government plan to take to preserve the declining of population of Himalayan brown bears that are being regularly beaten to death in parts of Jammu and Kashmir?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) As per information available with the Central Government, about 60 elephants have been reportedly killed in accidents which includes train accidents and electrocution and in poaching in the year 2006-07.

(b) Ministry is implementing National Afforestation Programme for regenerating degraded forests and adjoining areas all over the country including in the Eastern States. The National Afforestation Programme has provision for bamboo plantation also which is the preferred habitat for elephants.

(c) No, Sir. However, safeguard measures have been implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Railways to prevent death of elephants and other wildlife in train accidents which includes introduction of speed limits in vulnerable sections.

(d) As per reports of the Government of Jammu and Kashmir, no instance of killing of Himalayan Brown Bear has taken place. However, there has been some incidents of killing of Asiatic Black Bears in retaliation when the bears came to human habitation and attacked the people. The State Government has taken several measures to protect the Asiatic Black Bears which includes:—

(i) Constitution of Coordination Committee consisting of Revenue, Police, Forests and Forest Protection Force;

(ii) Assigning research study to Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) on man-animal conflict in Jammu and Kashmir;

(iii) Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun has taken up research study in Jammu and Kashmir to study and behaviour and ecology of black bears.

(iv) Signing of Memorandum of Understanding with Wildlife SOS, a voluntary organization for carrying out census, survey, rescue and rehabilitation of black bears.

(v) Publicity and awareness programmes etc.

License scheme for hunting animals

1841. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of the fact that Madhya Pradesh may allow hunting of blackbucks, wildboars;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government of Madhya Pradesh is finalizing the license scheme for hunting animals such as Cheetals, Blackbucks and wildboars; and

(d) if so, the actions Government proposes to take under the Wildlife Act to prevent such a move of the Madhya Pradesh Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) to (d) As per the information received from the State Government, no decision has been taken to allow a license scheme for the hunting of wild animals. However, Rule 11 to 31 of the Madhya Pradesh Wildlife (Protection) Rules, 1974, already provides for a regulation system for hunting of wild animals that are dangerous to human life or to property.

World Lake Conference at Jaipur

1842. SHRI SYED AZEEZ PASHA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government is adopting the Jaipur declaration, the 12th World Lake Conference held at Jaipur during 29th October—2nd November, 2007; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) During the 12th World Lake Conference (Taal 2007), organized under the aegis of International Lake Environment Committee (ILEC) Foundation and hosted by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India, at Jaipur (Rajasthan) from 28th October to 2nd November, 2007, a ***Jaipur Declaration*** was adopted at the valedictory session of the Conference. The declaration recognized the importance of lakes and wetlands for the goods and services they provide and expressed concern over the deteriorating state of these water bodies globally. It called upon the Governments and international organizations to take measures for dvelopment of water quality standards, appropriate research methodologies, guidelines, treatment technologies, etc. in respect of lakes and wetlands and promote their restoration and management through various measures. It also emphasized the need for strong institutional and financial mechanism for regional and international cooperation in the area of lakes and wetlands management.

Pending water schemes of Chhattisgarh

†1843. SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the names of water schemes of Chhattisgarh State lying pending for want of approval in principle and since when these schemes are pending;

(b) whether there are any obstacles in the implementation of these schemes; and

(c) the details of approval of the scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Conservation of medicinal plants

1844. SHRI KAMAL AKHTAR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleasd to state:

(a) the details of the programme run by his Ministry for Conservation of medicinal plants in the country;

(b) the amount spent on conservation of medicinal plants in the country since last three years, State-wise, year-wise and project-wise; and

(c) the budget allocated to his Ministry for conservation of medicinal plants in the country during the Eleventh Five Year Plan?

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi